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September 5, 2018

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20509
ATTN: Office of Program Delivery

Re: Wilmington Rail Realignment Project Application for CRISI Grant

Dear Sir or Madam:

The purpose of this letter is to support the efforts of the City of Wilmington, NC to obtain a CRISI grant from the FRA. The grant will assist in the relocation of the freight use of the Wilmington beltline rail, which is owned and operated by CSX, from the center of the congested heart of the City to the west side of the Cape Fear River through uninhabited areas to provide a direct access from the Port of Wilmington to the CSX Davis Rail Yard at Navassa, NC. The new route will increase efficiency and save time between the Davis Rail Yard and the Port of Wilmington. The relocation will also allow for a re-purpose of the right-of-way for public use.

Future near term and long-term growth in shipping, train length and speed, and general traffic congestion, including trucks, within the City will necessitate consideration of solutions to the benefit of the Port of Wilmington, CSX and public health and safety. Having a direct route into the Port will be especially important should there be catastrophic events that stop train traffic through the City of Wilmington at a time when it may be most critical to reach the Port.

The Cape Fear Council of Governments would like to see the City of Wilmington's effort be successful to secure funding for the PE/NEPA track of the CRISI grant opportunity so this important and transformative project for SE North Carolina can move forward.

Respectfully,



Chris May
Executive Director

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